



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Seashore

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Point Reyes National Seashore News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Park Rangers and Drug Enforcement Officers Remove Illegal Marijuana Cultivation Site at Point Reyes National Seashore

On September 19, 2002, Rangers at Point Reyes National Seashore received a visitor report of a marijuana grow site in the Park near the Dogtown area. Rangers and Special Agents of the National Park Service located the site and placed it under surveillance that night. At approximately 6:00 am the morning of September 20, Rangers contacted two individuals after they observed them loading objects into their vehicle near the site. Two suspects were arrested (Pedro Cano and Blanca Alvaradosoto of Brentwood, CA) after traces of marijuana were found in the vehicle.

Rangers and Special Agents acting with support from Drug Enforcement Administration officers and Marin County Major Crime Task Force, entered the grow site and removed approximately 2,750 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of \$1.5 million dollars. The investigation is continuing.

"We will aggressively pursue prosecution of illegal drug activities on parkland. We want to ensure the safety of our park visitors and safeguard the park's outstanding resources. Based on previous experience, the damage to the park is expected to exceed \$50,000," stated Colin Smith, District Ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore.

The area suffered massive resource damage from the growing operation. A comprehensive resource assessment is being conducted, but preliminary estimates show over 100 trees were removed to make the site, several water holding ponds were dug into the hillside, and an extensive irrigation system was constructed to a spring approximately ½ mile from the site. Insecticides and other hazardous materials were found on site, as well as a fully-developed camp with a tree house and kitchen area.

"The National Park Service wants to thank the anonymous tip received to bring this to our attention. We also wish to thank the other agencies involved in this multi-jurisdictional effort," stated Superintendent Don Neubacher.

Efforts are underway to remove all the garbage from the site and to do restoration work.

-NPS-

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